

Dear Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker and all Appropriations Committee members:

The East Windsor Family Resource Center has been a huge part of my life for the past 16 years. I have been working for this amazing program since I was 16 years old. I started as a “homework helper” in the afterschool program. Since then I also worked in the summer program, before school program, preschool classroom, playgroups, childcare for when we offer parenting classes and I have done many administrative tasks in between. I have been a part of almost every program we offer. I can honestly say, we offer a quality program to so many families. Most families have said to me “I don’t know what I would do without this program and the staff”. If you are a parent then you understand that leaving your child is a very hard task to do, however if you can leave your child in the care of people you trust and know that they will be there for your child, well then this task is a little bit easier. Most of the time, when a parent comes to pick up their child, the child doesn’t want to leave. One time a parent stated “the last place he went to, he was crying at the window every day when I picked him up”. This parent was so thrilled to see her child actually having fun and not waiting for her by the window with tears. The program and the staff make a difference in the lives of the families we service.

This program not only impacted my life as an employee but also as a mother to an 8 year old daughter, who also attends the FRC program. My daughter and I started attending playgroups together when she was just 4 months old. I received home visits from the PAT trained parent educator and this program in itself helped me and my daughter so much. My daughter would get so excited when Ms. Sharon would come over and play with her. She looked forward to playgroup every day. This was the start of her being able to socialize with her peers, become comfortable with other adults, and get familiar with the school that she was attending. Playgroup also helped her understand what structure and a routine are in the school setting. I am a firm believer that this is why she is so comfortable at school now as an 8 year old and why it was such a smooth transition for her when she went into Pre-K and the FRC preschool room.

After she was too old to attend playgroups, she attended the preschool classroom, afterschool and the summer program. She now also attends the before school program. Even though she is only 8 years old, all her fun, exciting memories are when she was either in afterschool, or our summer program. As an employee and a parent this makes me extremely happy and proud to know that this program does make a difference. She would not be able to experience all that she is experiencing without the FRC program.

Yes, we offer many programs for all families, we make childcare convenient, we have quality childcare, we have supplies to have the children to play with and we ensure all the children are in a safe environment. However, the fact that is program effects and makes a difference in so many families' lives, well that is the part that makes us employees and parents want to fight for this program.

Without this program, for one I wouldn't have a job. But more importantly the friendships and the connections my daughter has made with the other children that attend FRC, wouldn't continue on a daily basis. I wouldn't have anyone that I know and trust to watch her in the before and after school hours, or during the summer. I would be devastated, as well as my daughter if the program that we love and attend daily, was not there anymore due to budget cuts. Family Resource Centers are the programs that are literally there for families from 7 in the morning until 6 at night, so parents can work. If this program was cut or the funding was cut drastically, this would be detrimental for countless families, myself included.

Please reconsider the budget cuts proposed to FRC. Families like my own need this program for the safety and well being of our children.

Thank you,

Melanie Joslin